

SURFACE ACCESS

272. A range of potential surface access options was previously assessed as part of the Project for the Sustainable Development of Heathrow in order to support the air quality issue by ensuring a cut in vehicle emissions. However, now that these appear not to be necessary, only measures to deal with congestion are deemed necessary. The consultation document states:

“As our work has been focused on measures to ensure that the air quality limit values could be met, we have not considered in detail the precise traffic impacts of additional capacity on surrounding communities or the necessary demand management measures to reduce road traffic growth or contain congestion to specified levels... Any work to prepare a planning application to approve growth at Heathrow would need to address such matters, including physical connections to the road and rail networks, and measures to reduce travel by car and increase the use of public transport alternatives.” (paragraph 3.161 Chapter 3 Consultation Document).

273. The background surface access report is therefore of little use. Traffic measures are no longer deemed necessary to deal with the air quality problem and therefore no additional strategic public transport proposals or capacity is proposed specifically to support an expanded airport. Instead measures such as Crossrail and AirTrack are already in progress, and possible increases in capacity on the Piccadilly Line would deal only with existing overcrowding and natural growth – not the four fold increase in peak hour demand predicted with a third runway.

274. The consultation advises that the public transport mode share with a third runway would only increase by 1% as a result of Crossrail and 1% with AirTrack and bus and coach service improvements. The modelling predicts that public transport annual mode share will rise from 36.2% in 2004 to 41.7% in 2030 representing an increase from 15.8 million passengers in 2004 to 38.2 million passengers in 2030. However, London Underground predict a background increase of 50% more passengers on the Piccadilly Line by 2020 but with only a 20% increase in its capacity via the PPP. It is disingenuous for Government to claim that the level of public transport provision is “sufficient to manage the level of forecast demand” and then leave this issue to BAA at the planning stage. The failure to assess traffic impacts and mitigation measures means that further options such as road pricing are likely to be needed once congestion becomes acute. Such measures are already under consideration by the Highways Agency to deal with existing congestion and the major increase in traffic from Terminal 5.

275. Hillingdon considers that these difficulties highlight the error of adding a major traffic generator into the middle of the most congested part of the national motorway system. Measures necessary to deal with the resulting congestion on the road network such as high cost road pricing and other measures will have adverse impacts on local communities.

276. The lack of any new strategic public transport initiatives linked to expansion is a major lost opportunity. It is likely that history will repeat itself with public transport investment lagging ever further behind airport expansion. The Aviation White Paper’s

requirement of improving public access to Heathrow has already fallen at the first hurdle.